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Professional Journal Reading #2 – Critical Thinking and Technology

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On the Tech News World website, writer Richard Adhikari asked the twenty-first century question “Is the Internet Killing Critical Thinking?” To answer this question, Adhikari compared conventional and modern ways of gathering information. Within that framework, he describes the change from being given information versus seeking out information. Finally, critical thinking links all ideas together: when people choose their information through the internet, are individuals still thinking critically about what they are reading.

Adhikari describes the internet as a source of “mixed blessings.” I very much agree with his point of view. The internet has such wonderful sources and insights to the world with just a click of the mouse. Information is abounding online but some information is more worthwhile than others. The author of “Is the Internet Killing Critical Thinking?” references cyberbullying and white-power groups as parts of the internet that display of insignificant information. While there are some clearly negative aspects of the internet, I truly believe, as an educator, that the pros outweigh the cons.

Whenever discussing the internet usage, the issue of censorship typically is brought up. This article is no exception. Adhikari does not start specifically whether his is for or against censorship but does make it clear that he believes in other forms of information that are censored such as newspapers, magazines, and tv. In these form of media individuals were exposed to a diversity of subjects and viewpoints. He stated, “News consumers were passive recipients of content delivered by print reporters or TV anchors, and choices were few. Now (with the internet), it's alarmingly easy to avoid any troublesome information that might provoke one to really think.” Adhikari is inadvertently suggesting that before the internet people were forced to know more information that may not be in there immediate interests but now with the internet individuals know only information that they seek. I believe that any form of information whether newspaper, nightly news, or an article online the information has to be received and interpreted. I don’t think that just because someone is given information on a different subject than they are used to or one they have an interest in that the critical thinking ends. Censorship will only hinder critical thinking.

With a base on reading habits of individuals, Adhikari present the idea that individuals only seek out information that is interesting and logical to them. As a result of so much information on the internet, our brains have to sift through the information, picking out information that is applicable to us. With this form of gathering information, Adhikari stated that people tent to not seek out alternative viewpoints or ideas different than their own. I disagree with Adhikari’s form of thinking to an extent. I would agree with him that many people that use the internet for leisure activities that do not always produce critical thinking, but when taught how to use the internet to for evaluating multiple viewpoints, critical thinking can be used effectively. With access to the internet many times I able to multiple viewpoints at a quicker speed than other conventional aspects of research. If the internet is going to be used as a critical thinking tool, we need to teach people to use it as such.

As teachers, we desire to help raise individuals that think critically about their environment in hopes that they will evolve society and create positive changes. If someone was to ask me the question, “Is the internet killing critical thinking?” I would have a much more opinionated viewpoint after reading this article. The internet is not “killing” critical thinking; it is just changing how we critically thought before. To use the internet as a critical thinking tool we must teach people to use it as such.

Works Cited

Adhikari, R. (2009, Sep. 8 ). In Technology News: Tech Buzz: Is the Internet Killing Critical Thinking?. Retrieved Nov. 1, 2011, from http://www.technewsworld.com/story/68059.html